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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LISBON 000557

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EU](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE EU PRESIDENCY LOGISTICS (C-RE6-02209)

REF: A. SECSTATE 13276

[1](#)B. LISBON 00253

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon.
Reason 1.4 (B,C,D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) In preparation for Portugal's term as the President of the European Council from July-December 2007, the Government of Portugal established an office dedicated to the logistical coordination efforts. The "Presidential Mission" (Missao Presidencia), led by career diplomat Jaime Leita0, establishes the calendar of events in Portugal, designs and updates the webpage, coordinates event security, catering, lodging, transportation, media accreditation, and offers a program for the ministers' spouses. The Mission began its work in the fall of 2005 and became fully staffed around July [1](#)2006. In November 2006, Embassy Lisbon seconded an officer to the office for a one month bilateral exchange, so the Embassy has close working-level contacts and detailed information about logistical arrangements.

The Price of Doing Business

[1](#)2. (SBU) Portugal's current austerity budget limits its ability to fund its EU Presidency at the same level as other EU member states. Leita0 stresses that the Portuguese government cannot request that the nation "tighten its belt" while it spends lavishly on EU meetings, so the MFA's Presidency budget is limited to 45 million euros. Other agencies will have small budget supplements added to account for their additional EU responsibilities, but MFA is in charge of the vast majority of the policy and logistical coordination efforts. Of the MFA's total, roughly 12 million is earmarked to support Portuguese embassies with their additional costs for staff overtime and representational activities. The remaining 33 million will cover all other logistical requirements. Although several MFA officials have mentioned that they suspect Portugal will exceed its budget, the Mission is cautiously spending in an attempt to keep within official spending limits. (Note: The 33 million is 20% lower than Portugal's 2000 budget even though the EU now has an additional 12 members and 50% lower than Finland spent in its just completed presidency.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Portugal plans to limit costs by hosting most meetings in one "permanent venue" at Lisbon's Atlantic Pavilion in the grounds formerly used for the 1998 Expo. The advantages include that the site is fully operational, offers ample parking, is accessible by both the train and Lisbon city metro systems, and is city property. Since the Lisbon city government owns the facilities, the Mission used a legal clause similar to eminent domain in the United States to use the space rent free. Unfortunately, Lisbon had already leased the facilities to others immediately before and after

Portugal's EU term, so the construction company will only have three weeks to construct special delegation rooms with translation booths and press conference spots before July 1 and four days to dismantle their work before New Year's Eve.

¶4. (SBU) The second cost-saving measure was to solicit corporate sponsorship in twelve key areas including car rental for 40 Audi A8s, cell phones from either Portuguese Telecom (PT) or Vodafone, computers from Hewlett-Packard with Microsoft software, GALP gasoline, bottled water, and paper. Sponsor donations were capped at 250,000 euros and the GOP will pay the difference if necessary. Finally, the GOP will use active duty police officers as drivers to avoid using costly professional chauffeurs.

Making Do with Less

¶5. (U) While the budget has forced a limit on spending and on staffing of the logistics office, Portugal has discussed strategy with other small nations to compensate. One significant tool is to use the conference management software that Luxembourg developed during its 2005 EU presidency and Germany is currently using both for its presidency and the G-8 logistical coordination. The software allows the 30-person Presidency Mission staff to set up meetings, accredit delegates and media members, notify all participants of changes via text messages, and account for the running costs from any network accessible computer in real time. When Luxembourg officials were demonstrating the software's capabilities, they noted that Luxembourg's presidency had used the software to add 30 unexpected meetings after the Asian tsunami. They noted that each presidency has faced some unexpected crisis and stressed that the software was

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developed to make the most of a small team working under a tight budget. Everyone in the logistics office is currently training on the system's use and should be well versed by July.

¶6. (U) Logistics office officials also told Pol-Econ officer that the Portuguese were accustomed to working on projects at the last minute and were flexible enough to make necessary changes as needed. They seem confident that their experienced EU logistical team, half of whom worked on the logistics for Portugal's last EU Presidency in 2000, will be able to handle any last minute changes.

Playing Well with Others

¶7. (U) The new concept of a "trio" presidency with Germany and Slovenia is more focused on policy coordination than logistics, but Portugal is paying careful attention to making the transition as easy as possible. Since Germany and Portugal are using the same conference management software, registration and communications should transition smoothly, and Portugal is making efforts to emulate Germany's other best practices where possible. Portugal also has offered Slovenia advice on their first presidency and encouraged them to consider using a permanent venue and Luxembourg's software to facilitate the transition. Portugal has regular meetings with other EU member states to discuss logistical plans for upcoming presidencies.

Other Priorities

¶8. (C) Leita0 and others in his office voiced concerns that their tight budget might give others the impression that Portugal was hosting "on the cheap." In particular, lodging and catering budgets were less than half that of other recent

EU hosts. The catering contract was for either one or two buffets per day (depending on media participation) not to exceed 200,000 euros total over six months. At the same time, EU regulations state that any contract over 180,000 euros must be opened up to an EU-wide competition and Leitaó was apprehensive that outside catering competition from more expensive labor markets could drive up local bids. Lodging the ministers during informal ministerial meetings was another concern since the budget would put ministers in four star hotels in Lisbon while Portugal had offered five star accommodations in 2000. The plan was to work with Banco Espirito Santo Tourism to provide up to four rooms per delegation for many meetings - up to 120 rooms for all high level meetings except the European-Mediterranean meetings which will probably exceed 200 rooms (see ref B for schedule). To ensure miscellaneous charges are paid by the delegations, the Mission will require all delegates to register a credit card number for any room service, mini bar, or other charges. In 2000, miscellaneous bills from delegation hotel charges topped several thousand dollars.

¶9. (SBU) Media coverage will vary depending on public interest in the particular meeting, so the media services coordinators are attempting to make it easy for journalists to get online accreditation, filing services at the Atlantic Pavilion, and individual plasma screens for each registered news service. Journalists will have 120 filing stations for their use during the Presidency. Media can also request accreditation on the day of the meeting but may be subject to long waits and security checks.

Bio Notes

¶10. (SBU) The Presidency Mission Logistics office is staffed with two career diplomats, several civil service employees from other agencies, and contractors. The director is Jaime Leitaó, who served as Deputy Director of the office during ¶2000. He worked most recently in Brussels as the Portuguese Spokesperson at the EU and in the Portuguese embassy in Rome. He is fluent in French and Italian, and comfortable in English. Leitaó worked well with former Minister of Foreign Affairs Freitas do Amaral and with current FM Luis Amado. He briefs Amado on the Mission's progress monthly. Leitaó studied law and reviews all contracts carefully but delegates other negotiations and all technical issues to his staff. Leitaó has two teenage children.

¶11. (SBU) Joao Ribeiro de Almeida is the Coordinator for the Permanent Venue at the Atlantic Pavilion and is in charge of establishing the schedule, and overseeing modifications to

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the venue. Ribeiro de Almeida previously worked as FM Freitas do Amaral's chief of staff and transferred into the Mission when FM Amado assumed office. Ribeiro de Almeida is a career diplomat who has served in Zagreb, Luanda, Dili, and Athens. He is fluent in English and French.
Hoffman